

Friendships play a vital role in helping people get through substantial challenges in life, according to a new study

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Credit: Vilem Skarolek/public domain

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Until now, little research has been carried out into the role friends and, in particular, best friends play in building [resilience](#) to

adversity—surviving and thriving in the face of difficult times.

The new preliminary study, by Dr Rebecca Graber, University of Brighton Senior Lecturer in Psychology, for the first time provides long-term statistical evidence of the enormous benefit these valued [social relationships](#) have on adults.

Dr Graber, who carried out the research whilst at the University of Leeds, recruited 185 adults through online [social networking sites](#), university events and community organisations supporting socially-isolated adults. Some 75 adults completed the questionnaire.

Participants completed assessments on psychological resilience, best friendship quality, coping behaviours and self-esteem. Participants then completed the same assessments one year later, to see how best friendship quality had impacted resilience processes over this period.

Dr Graber said: "These findings reveal that best friendships are a protective mechanism supporting the development of [psychological resilience](#) in [adults](#), although the mechanisms for this relationship remain unclear.

"The study provides long-term statistical evidence, for the first time, of the vital role of these valued social relationships for developing resilience in a community-based adult sample, while posing open questions for just how best friendships facilitate resilience in this way."

These findings support previous research by Dr Graber, published last year, revealing that best friends facilitate resilience processes in socioeconomically vulnerable children.

Provided by British Psychological Society

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